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REPORT
No. 97-486

COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM— TITLE V OLDER AMERICANS ACT

JULY 1 (legislative day, JUNE 8), 1982.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HATCH (for Mr. EAGLETON), from the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. Res. 340]

The Committee on Labor and Human Resources, to which was referred the resolution (S. Res. 340) with respect to the Community Service Employment program under title V of the Older Americans Act, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the resolution do pass.

SUMMARY

The Community Service Employment program for low-income persons age 55 and older, authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act, has in the seventeen years of its existence, dramatically demonstrated its capacity to recruit and use older workers as a valuable community resource in terms of time, talent, and dollars. For every dollar invested, the Community Service Employment program saves $1.15. FICA contributions from title V employees amounted to more than $1.5 million. Senate Resolution 340 expresses the sense of the Senate that no action be taken to terminate or otherwise weaken the Community Services Employment program under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

BACKGROUND

The Community Service Employment program for persons age 55 and older was modeled after Operation Mainstream, first funded in 1965 under the Economic Opportunity Act. Operation Mainstream was created as a pilot program under a provision authorizing jobs for poor and chronically unemployed adults, primarily in rural areas. The first Operation Mainstream project for older workers, initiated through a grant to Green Thumb, Inc., a non-profit affiliate of the National Farm-

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ers Union, provided jobs involving conservation and beautification of the environment.

In 1967, administrative responsibility for Operation Mainstream was transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Department of Labor, but funding remained through the Economic Opportunity Act. The Department of Labor, like its predecessor, entered into agreements with national organizations for sponsoring employment projects for older workers.

The 1973 Older Americans Comprehensive Services Amendments expanded upon employment projects conducted under Operation Mainstream, authorizing a separate older worker program for low-income persons aged 55 and older who had poor employment prospects. The Older Americans Act Amendments of 1975 extended the program for three years, placing it under the Older Americans Act. Subsequent amendments to the Act in 1978, and 1981, extended and expanded the program.

Three major needs are effectively met through the program: employment and income for low-income older persons; training and transition both into the mainstream of community life and, to a lesser degree, private sector jobs; and the provision of innumerable services in communities throughout the Nation.

The Administration's Fiscal Year 1983 budget proposes to eliminate the special part-time jobs program for low-income elderly under Title V, a program that, just last year, Congress reauthorized for three years at $277.1 million, $296.5 million, and $317.3 million for Fiscal Years 1982, 1983, and 1984, respectively. The Administration proposes that Title V be merged into a special target group employment program in which low-income older workers would vie for employment opportunities with migrant workers, displaced homemakers, and Indians, for a total funding level of $200 million.

The funding reduction proposed by the Administration will mean greater levels of unemployed older workers. It will mean that some of the 86,000 seniors who are currently benefiting from job training and referrals provided through Title V employment services will not receive those services. It will mean that communities throughout the country will no longer benefit from the work of these seniors. It will mean that many elderly will lose their self-sufficiency and sense of self-worth.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Senate Resolution 340 expresses the sense of the Senate that no action be taken to terminate or otherwise weaken the Community Service Employment program under title V of the Older Americans Act.

On the same day that the Committee favorably ordered reported this resolution, it also favorably reported S. 2036, the Training for Jobs Act. That Act includes specific authority for special training programs for economically disadvantaged workers aged 55 or older, setting aside three percent of the funds available for state and local programs for this purpose.

In light of the Administration's proposal to merge the existing Community Service Employment program for senior citizens into a broader job training bill, and the Committee's actions in providing a special authority for older workers in the Training for Jobs Act, the

Committee believes it is important to send a clear signal to the more than 86,000 persons participating in the Community Service Employment program each year that the Committee is in no way merging the existing title V program into the job training program and that this Committee intends to maintain the title V program in future years at the level necessary to insure that its current 54,200 jobs and its other services are maintained.

ESTIMATED REVENUE IMPACT

The resolution itself will have no revenue impact.

VOTE OF THE COMMITTEE IN REPORTING THE RESOLUTION

In compliance with paragraph 7(c) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following statement is made relative to the vote by the Committee to report the resolution: the resolution was ordered favorably reported without objection.

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